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To: ["R7 Senior" <Staff>](#)
CC:
Date: 3/18/2013 6:03:14 AM
Subject: KSDK Ch. 5 St. Louis - Bridgeton Landfill called 'dirty bomb,'debate heats up

Bridgeton Landfill called 'dirty bomb,' debate heats up

7:52 PM, Mar 15, 2013

<http://www.ksdk.com/news/article/369530/3/Bridgeton-Landfill-called-dirty-bomb-debate-heats-up>

By [Steve Patterson](#)

BRIDGETON, Mo. (KSDK) - Some environmentalists are now calling it a "dirty bomb." It's at the core of a heated debate in Bridgeton on whether or not a landfill poses a serious radioactive risk to the public.

The Bridgeton Landfill is emitting underground heat and giving off a nasty, permanent stench in the area. The risk may be that it sits right next to the West Lake Landfill, a known storage site to radioactive materials from the early 1970s.

Some are saying threat of that heat reaching the waste could be disastrous.

"You can have the conditions for a dirty bomb. And that has to be considered," said environmentalist Peter Anderson, one of two people the Teamsters and the Missouri Coalition for the Environment brought in Friday morning to brief the public on their side: that Bridgeton is ticking.

"That is a completely false statement," said Republic Services environmental specialist Bryan Sehie. "Right now the reaction is a quarter of a mile away from the materials that are stored in West Lake. It is located deep within a quarry and it is not of concern of impacting that material."

Sehie says the Coalition's claims are overdrawn and borderline preposterous. He says the "fire" that's been reported is an underground heat event that will not spread, the odor is harmless, and the radioactive materials are in no danger of being reached.

"Republic services does not have family that live, work and play in this community; we do," said the Coalition's Energy Director Ed Smith. "Their number one fiduciary duty is to their shareholders. Our number one is to the health and wellness of people around this site. So if that's extremism, I'll take it."

Smith says any "heat event" with that title is dangerous enough to be a fire, the stench that's been cleared for testing hasn't been cleared enough and the radioactive materials are a ticking time bomb.

The findings from an EPA study on the matter are set to be released in about three to four weeks.